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Thursday, January 2 - Wednesday, January 8, 2014 Advertising/Newsdesk: 01235 511700 www.basingstokeobserver.co.uk

FOUR CHARGED IN HEROIN BUST

Quartet to appear in court in two weeks on drugs offences after police investigation

DETECTIVES in Basingstoke have charged four people with heroin-related offences after an investigation into illegal drugs.

Two people from Basingstoke - a 48-year-old man and a 36-year-old woman - have both been charged with being concerned in the supply of heroin.

They have both been released on bail, and will appear at Winchester Crown Court on January 16.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

A 20-year-old man and a 16-year-old boy, both from London, have been charged with the same offence.

As the Observer went to press, the man was remanded in custody by Basingstoke Magistrates, and the boy was taken into the care of the local authority.

They will also appear at Winchester Crown Court on the same date.

The investigations are in relation to a drive dedicated to stamping out drug-related violence, entitled Operation Fortress.

One of the primary aims of the operation is restricting the supply of class A drugs.

And police in Basingstoke are keen to hear from anybody who is concerned about illegal drug activity in their neighbourhood.

They are also urging the public to remain on the lookout for any suspicious signs that might point to drug-related activity in their communities.

Things to look out for include a sudden increase in visitors to a property, with people only staying for a short space of time, and people loitering around a specific area, using their mobile phones frequently.

Short exchanges between small groups of people near a property can also be suspicious, as can people leaving a house or flat several times a day, returning a short time later on each occasion.

Police are also wary of new-looking or hire cars parked outside a house they would not normally be, being driven by somebody you may not associate with that style of car.

Anyone with any concerns is asked to call 101, or 999 if a crime is in progress.

You can alternatively email operation.fortress@hampshire.pn.police.uk in confidence, or contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

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County's football gets £1.5m boost

GRASSROOT clubs in Hampshire could benefit from a new £1.5million fund made available by the Premier League and the Football Association (FA).

By **Jack Johnson**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

The fund is in aid of the development of grassroots football clubs across the country.

Applications for the fund opens on January 6 and closes on February 17.

Any club can apply, however this year there is an emphasis on the under-15 and above age bracket.

There is also more focus on growing the number of girls', women's and disability teams.

Clubs can access the fund through the Grow the Game Scheme, managed by the Football Foundation.

It can help to pay for league entry, referee fees, first aid kits, FA courses and kits while £1,500 is available towards creating a new team.

Television presenter and Football Foundation ambassador, Ben Shephard, praised the move, and said the funding is "excellent" news.

He added: "This year we want to continue to increase participation across all age ranges, but particularly want to build on the success of last year by continuing to drive-up the numbers of people playing the game amongst under-represented groups, in particular the under-15 and above group, as well as women's teams, girls' teams and disability teams.

"Any clubs that are interested in applying for a grant should visit the Grow the Game section of the foundation's website, or speak to Hampshire FA to find out more information."

Sacha Nicholas, county development manager at Hampshire FA, said: "The Grow the Game grant is a great opportunity for grassroots clubs in Hampshire.

"With rising costs of participation this funding will make a real difference and we hope that clubs will grab the opportunity to develop new teams."

Funded by the Premier League, The FA, and the Government, via Sport England, the Football Foundation is the country's largest sports charity.

Since it was launched in 2000, the Foundation has awarded around 9,600 grants worth more than £412million towards improving grassroots sport, which it has used to attract additional partnership funding of over £565million.

For more information about applying, go online and visit www.footballfoundation.org.uk.

Miller keeps up pressure on Thames Water plans

BASINGSTOKE MP Maria Miller has been pressing senior representatives of Thames Water on growing issues such as pollution levels.

Mrs Miller recently pledged to keep up pressure on Thames Water, on the pollution levels of the River Loddon, and on plans to transport sewage to Basingstoke Sewage Treatment Work.

Along with borough councillor Paul Miller, she met representatives of Thames Water to review future plans, discuss how the health of the river can be improved and minimise inconvenience to local residents.

"With the Local Plan indicating that more than 700 houses a year could be built in the Borough for the next 15 years, it is important to understand how the Sewage Works will cope," she said.

"Currently, Thames Water has no detailed plan for how to cope with the increased levels of sewage beyond 2021, nor do they have any plans to reduce the pollution levels in the River Loddon, which already breaks EU laws on phosphate levels.

"I have asked Thames Water to consider what they can do to reverse this situation and improve the health of the river."

She also spoke about the impact of 85 lorries full of sewage being on Basingstoke's roads.

"They recognised that our roads were already overloaded, and told me that they were looking at how they could minimise the impact on the traffic situation as well as local residents," she said.

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• Maria Miller

News Bites

Grinch strikes

POLICE are investigating a burglary where several wrapped Christmas presents were stolen from a house in Marshcourt, Lychpit, on December 18.

Sometime between 8.30am and 7pm, offenders broke in and took the presents which included DVDs, Playstation games, a mobile phone and a gold watch.

PC Mark Pullman said: "Were you in the area on December 18? Did you see anything suspicious?"

Call 101 with information.

Put Hart and soul into Burns night

CHAIRMAN of Hart District Council, Cllr Stephen Gorys, will be holding a charity Burns night celebration next month, with all proceeds going to the Chairman's Award Scheme.

The night on February 1 includes the piping in of the haggis, a three-course meal, entertainment and dancing as well as the singing of Auld Lang Syne at the end of the evening.

Tickets cost £35 each, and takes place at Yateley Manor School. For more details, contact the Chairman's office on 01252 774143 or email enquiries@hart.gov.uk.

Caution over roadside scams

POLICE are warning motorists of a scam where they are flagged down at the side of main roads and asked for money, following an incident in Basingstoke before Christmas.

On December 18, a man was flagged down on the slip road of the A303 near Picket Twenty, where a man with an Audi A4 car asked for money and fuel.

Another incident had taken place the previous day in Andover, and motorists are advised to report any similar suspicious activities to 101.

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Chewing gum fund causes controversy

THE DEPUTY leader of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) has defended the authority's decision to use 'innovation' funds to remove chewing gum from the town's streets.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Councillor Ranil Jayawardena admitted the council put money from the Mary Portas High Street Innovation Fund, awarded to town centres across the UK, towards the £18,000 removal operation in Basingstoke town centre.

The move has attracted criticism from some quarters, with Alan Stone, local business owner and UKIP candidate for Basingstoke in the next parliamentary elections, expressing his "disgust" at the move.

Mr Stone said £9,800 of the £100,000 grant had been used by the council to tackle the chewing gum problem.

"The High Street Innovation grant was never intended for general cleaning," he said. "It is an innovation grant. Cleaning is hardly innovative.

"We are appalled at this blatant abuse of grant money for uses that our rates and taxes are supposed to cover.

"Either they were complacent in this or ignorant of the fact. In either case they should get the money back and use it for the purpose it was intended."

However, Cllr Jayawardena, a Conservative party parliamentary candidate for North East Hampshire, said there was 'no criteria for spend' on the funding.

"We had lots of helpful feedback on the best way to spend the High Street Innovation Fund grant," he said. "But it became clear that this was not enough money to do some of the things that are needed.

"That's why we invested over £600,000, including the High Street Innovation Fund, to really kick-start the Basingstoke Town Centre Programme.

"People and businesses have told us they would like to see improvements to the Top of the Town area look and feel."

The work on removing the gum was carried out nearly two months ago.

"Carrying out a deep clean of the streets, in particular targeting chewing gum mess, was one of these actions," he added.

"It is important that we do our best to keep the cleaner streets as gum free as possible, so we have also invested in a gum removal machine which we will be using in future."

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2014 - a year for people to stop smoking

A CAMPAIGN is being launched for the new year with the aim of getting people in Basingstoke to stop smoking.

Following on from the successful nationwide Stoptober campaign – the 28-day drive throughout October last year which saw nearly 6,000 people in Basingstoke and across Hampshire kick the habit – Hampshire County Council are making renewed efforts to get people to stop smoking.

The 6,000 figure meant Hampshire was the third highest county in England with the number of sign-ups for the Stoptober campaign.

The Hampshire NHS Stop Smoking Service, Quit4Life, also contributed to this figure being so high, helping staff at Hampshire County Council to quit the habit.

And the county council, as well as the regional health service, want to reinforce the message towards Hampshire residents as we head into 2014.

Councillor Liz Fairhurst, Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, said: "I would like to congratulate everyone who managed to quit in Stoptober. Quitting smoking is such a major achievement and the best way you can look after your health. Our Quit4Life programme helps smokers understand the realities of giving up and supports them to overcome those challenges."

'It's essential that young people have a voice'

• Benjamin Farnes with his award

A TEENAGER is celebrating after receiving a prestigious award for his work in the Youth Parliament.

Benjamin Farnes, 18, was previously Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for Basingstoke, Winchester and Eastleigh.

He was presented with the 'Making a Difference' Youth on Board award, for his work as a youth governor For Hampshire NHS Trust.

He was also recognised for his involvement in the parliament's National Transport Select Committee.

Serving New Forest and Test Valley member Sam Longmore, 16, was also honoured for his work since taking office in March.

Councillor Peter Edgar, Hampshire County Council's executive member for Education, said: "I am always impressed by the work delivered by Hampshire's Young MPs.

"It is essential that young people have a voice in Parliament in order to share the views of their peers and initiate positive local change for young people.

"The presentation of these awards to Sam and Benjamin recognises the significant impact our MYPs have on their local community and the important work they do both to support existing services for young people and to initiate new campaigns which directly respond to the needs of Hampshire's youth both in educational and social environments.

"I would like to congratulate them both on these wonderful achievements, which they have earned through enthusiasm and aptitude."

Festive shoebox thanks

NATIONAL charity Samaritan's Purse have thanked a centre at Chineham Business Park, for their efforts towards collecting shoeboxes filled with gifts for vulnerable children across Europe and Africa.

The Regus centre at Chineham is one of 220 across the UK that have collected over 5,000 shoeboxes between them.

They were put together by members of the public containing presents and vital items including toothbrushes, sweets, toys and colouring books, and were distributed to needy children in orphanages, as well as those in hospitals and refugee camps.

John Spencer, chief executive officer of Regus in the UK, said: "We are delighted to have been involved in this year's appeal and the response from everyone has been fantastic.

"Our centre teams thoroughly enjoyed their participation and were very happy to help this worthwhile cause."

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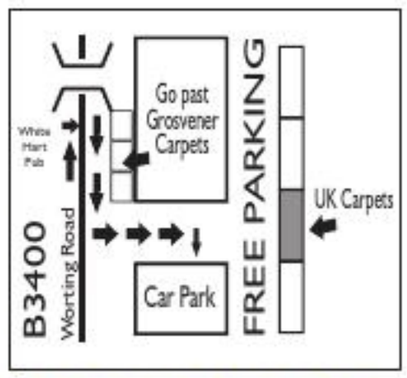

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Missing teen Jordan found safe and well

· Jordan Saunders has been found safe and well after going missing on December 19

MISSING teenager Jordan Saunders has been found safe and well by Hampshire Police.

The 14-year-old from Gosport went missing after not returning home on December 19.

He was reported missing after last being seen in the Eastleigh area on that same day.

The teenager was missing for nine days, but police reported last Saturday (December 28) that he was found safe and well.

Do you have a story to share with our readers?

Contact the Newsdesk on **01235 516930** or email **news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk**

Rewarding those who go extra mile

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

BASINGSTOKE people are being urged to nominate nursing staff for an annual awards ceremony honouring those in the profession.

The ninth annual Director of Nursing Awards (DONAs) are organised each year by Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The awards are for nursery, midwifery and therapy staff across all three Hampshire Hospitals site – Basingstoke, Andover and Winchester – as well as workers in Alton and Bordon community hospitals.

Chief nurse Donna Green, who presents the awards, said: "We are delighted to launch the ninth annual Director of Nursing Awards.

"We would love to hear from patients or visitors who feel that individuals or teams have gone beyond the call of duty to give exceptional care."

People can nominate staff in two categories – individual nurse / midwife / therapist and the team award for the same areas.

There are also three special awards as part of the ceremony – the Wallace award, which honours outstanding care for patients nearing the end of their life, the Rotary Club award for the overall winner of their choice, and the Chief Medical Officer's award.

In the 2013 DONA awards the Wallace Award went to Fiona Taylor, a staff nurse from The Firs, an older people's step-down unit at Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital.

The unit aims to provide a less formal setting for care, focusing on enabling patients to become as mobile and independent as possible, in preparation for leaving hospital.

Fiona received three nominations, including one which simply said: "Fiona has been my rock and my mum's godsend. She is the best!"

Nominations for the Director of Nursing Awards are open now.

Winners are announced at the award ceremony in June.

If you would like to nominate, you can do so online at www.hampshirehospitals.nhs.uk or complete a nomination form, available in local hospitals.

You can also nominate by calling call 01256 313435 or email dona@hhft.nhs.uk.

Find us on Twitter @BasingstokeNews

· Nominate a nurse, midwife or therapy team for the Director of Nursing Awards

News Bites

New Tesco plans

HOOK residents have got their first chance to look at plans for a new supermarket in the village.

Tesco currently have a 15,000sq ft store at the site in Station Road – where the consultation was held.

The company plans to demolish the current store to make way for car parking, as well as a recycling centre.

And a new store will be built, double the size of the current premises at 30,000sq ft.

Tesco hopes the new store will create 60 additional jobs – 136 people already work at the current site.

Rival store Sainsbury's announced it wanted to build a store – also 30,000sq ft – on land north east of Hook last year.

Hart District Council has not yet decided whether to give the go-ahead for these plans, which are earmarked for land that could alternatively see new housing built.

Overton burglary

POLICE are investigating a burglary at a property in Overton, after jewellery was stolen from a house on Elm Road between 1pm and 5.30pm on December 19.

Entry was forced into the house, and it is believed a person was seen to approach the address between 4pm and 5pm, who police would like to speak to.

PC David Catchpole from Basingstoke police station said: "I'd like to hear from anyone who was in the area at the time and who saw or heard anything out of the ordinary."

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Who has won in prize draw?

· The winners of the draw from Small Business Saturday in Basingstoke

SMALL businesses across the borough got a pre-Christmas boost thanks to a day dedicated to helping the independent retailers in the region.

The first UK-wide Small Business Saturday, on December 7, was designed to recognise small businesses and encourage people to shop local and support small retailers and not-for- profit organisations.

One area where participation was prominent was in Basingstoke's Top of the Town, with over 50 businesses taking part.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) also ran a prize draw in conjunction with the event.

Anyone who spent over £5 before 7pm from December 7 until 14 could enter the competition for a share of £1,000 worth of prizes.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

The draw was run in partnership with the local Federation of Small Businesses and Destination Basingstoke.

Deputy Leader of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Cllr Ranil Jayawardena said: "I'm really pleased that Small Business Saturday was such a success.

"The council's promotion helped draw attention to what our small businesses have to offer.

"For the Top of the Town area, initiatives like this can really help and we are hoping to support more events in 2014 as part of our Town Centre Programme."

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY PRIZE DRAW WINNERS

- **Katie Hales,** *who won a Truly Scrumptious pamper package and vouchers worth £350*
- **Nicola Fazackerley,** *who won a £130 Basing cycles voucher*
- **David Renn** *who won a £120 voucher for dinner for four and champagne at The Limeleaf*
- **Alison Devine** *who won a £100 voucher for The Secret Garden*
- **Jenny Little** *who won a £50 Anvil Arts voucher with champagne*
- **Bill Helyar,** *who won afternoon tea for two at The Tea Bar with a bottle of bubbly*
- **Shaun Mabbot**, *who won a £40 voucher for Oliver's Fish Restaurant*

Another 10 runners-up won Perk discount cards from Destination Basingstoke.

Cigarette thief strikes in Popley

A MAN has stolen £200 in cash and several boxes of cigarettes following a robbery at McColl's newsagents in Abbey Road, Popley on the morning of Christmas Eve.

He walked into the shop at about 7.30am and threatened a shop assistant while holding a knife, before demanding the money and cigarettes.

The man had his face covered with a bandana and is described as black, about 6ft tall and of a medium build.

He was wearing a black coat with the hood pulled up, blue jeans and blue trainers.

Detective constable Nick Hines said: "This type of incident is relatively rare in Basingstoke.

"There may have been several people going to work or getting a newspaper at the time of the robbery.

"Did you see anything? Do you know who is responsible for this robbery?"

Anyone with information is asked to contact Det Con Hines at Basingstoke police station on 101, or alternatively call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

News Bites

Cars vandalised

POLICE in Basingstoke are appealing for witnesses after more than 25 cars were damaged by vandals on Christmas Eve.

Between 5pm on Christmas Eve and 8am on Christmas Day, windscreen wipers were snapped, bent or ripped off cars parked in St Peter's Road and Margaret Road in South Ham.

PC Erin Davis said: "This was mindless behaviour that has resulted in damage to peoples vehicles and sizable repair bills for them on Christmas morning."

"Did you see anything suspicious in the area of St Peter's Road or Margaret Road overnight on Christmas Eve into Christmas Day? Did you see anyone causing this damage?"

Woman assaulted

A WOMAN was assaulted following an incident at the Morrison's supermarket in Basingstoke, and police are asking for anyone with information to come forward.

It took place at around 10.30am on December 10, when the victim was pushed and fell over, hitting her head and requiring treatment from paramedics.

A second woman helped the victim into the store but didn't stay until police arrived, and it is her that police wish to speak to.

Sergeant Emily Langdon said: "We really need to speak to the woman who helped the victim. She may have vital information for our investigation."

A 40-year-old man from Basingstoke was arrested in relation to the incident, but was later released with no further action.

Anyone with information is asked to call Sgt Langdon on 101.

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Honour for scheme that puts people first

A TRAINING programme that empowers people with learning disabilities to voice their thoughts, aspirations and needs more effectively has won an award that celebrates excellence in social care.

By **Adam Flinn**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

The FACES (Friendship, Assertiveness, Choice, Empowerment and Social Skills) programme, run by Hampshire County Council, trains staff in learning disability services to support those with special needs.

It won the 'Putting People First' category in the Great South East Care Awards, and now progresses to the national finals.

Cllr Liz Fairhurst, executive member for adult social care and public health, said: "It is vital that, whatever their disability, people are able to live the life they choose.

"FACES gives people with learning disabilities the skills and confidence to make their thoughts, feelings and choices known.

"It is part of our approach to helping people to live more independently, with greater choice and control over their lives and the care and support that they receive.

"The scheme is all about putting people first and as such is a deserving winner."

Around 50 people with learning disabilities are being supported through FACES.

The council created the programme in collaboration with Hampshire author, trainer and speech therapist Alex Kelly, who runs a day service in Ower for people with learning disabilities called Speaking Space.

The awards are part of the Great British Care Awards; a series of regional awards that celebrate excellence in social care and honour those who work in the sector throughout the country.

They cover the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors, as well as unpaid carers, with the winners of the regional awards being invited to the national finals in London in April and June this year.

On giving the award to FACES, judges commented that "FACES is such a simple concept that has a huge impact on individuals and their relationships".

They continued: "It should be adapted and implemented in all care settings. It's truly deserving of this award."

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News Bites

Tony's the man

HAMPSHIRE and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance (HIOWAA) have announced Tony Nicholson as their new chairman, who stepped up to his new post yesterday.

He has been a trustee of the charity since 2010 and was originally an operational helicopter pilot himself.

In the money?

ST Michael's Hospice have released the results of their lottery draw from December 20.

Basingstoke ticket 40889 claimed first prize of £1,000, while Oakley ticket 65452 won second prize of £100.

Third prize also went to an Oakley ticket, 95320, and fourth prize of £20 was won by 04825 of Kempshott.

Sixteen prizes of £5 were awarded to 02787, 03218, 14213, 18712, 21563, 23183, 25533, 33622, 39476, 52292, 63037, 65415, 68300, 70638, 81498 and 86567.

Father groped

POLICE are appealing for information after an unknown person approached a man at the Winklebury Way football complex and grabbed his buttock, as well as making lewd comments.

It took place at around 12.40pm on December 15, and the unknown man is understood to live in the Brighton Hill area, aged about 18, white, around 5ft 7ins tall of slim build with brown hair.

Anyone who knows who the man is should contact Special Constable Ben Whitcher at Basingstoke police station on 101.

'Smiley' trader wanted by cops

· Have you seen this man?

POLICE want to speak to a man with a 'smiley-wide mouth' after a rogue trading incident in Overton.

The man called at a house in Hill Road, Overton on December 12, and asked the woman who lived there if she had any rubbish she needed clearing.

The 59-year-old woman said she did, and the trader said it would cost £500.

She refused this offer and agreed to pay £50. She gave £30 in cash to the man, who told her to go inside while he removed the items.

He only took one item away and left the rest of the rubbish.

PC Stuart Bond said: "This appears to have been a rogue trader type incident where a vulnerable disabled woman was targeted.

"I would encourage people to be vigilant, check ID of anyone calling at your door and report anything suspicious on 101."

The man is white, aged 38-40. about 6ft 3ins tall, of a large, broad build and had dark hair with a parting. He had dark eyes, a round face and a smiley wide mouth.

He was wearing a black thigh-length winter rainproof jacket with red and orange horizontal stripes and a logo.

He also had a yellow ID card and spoke English.

PC Bond added: "If someone calls at your home and offers you a service, remember you are entitled to a seven day cooling-off period before any works begin.

"Do not hand over any money until works are completed to your satisfaction. Where possible get several quotes to ensure that the price you are paying is fair."

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Residents - beware of the rogues

POLICE are reminding residents to be aware of rogue traders after an elderly man was tricked out of money in Whitchurch.

The 78-year-old victim was encouraged by a workman to have his driveway resurfaced in November.

Work was left unfinished and was of a poor quality but the workman insisted on being paid in cash.

The victim drove to the bank and withdrew money to pay the workman.

Det Con Richard Chegwidden said: "Please remember to ask anyone who knocks on your door for identification and if you are thinking about having any work done follow these tips.

"Ask friends or relatives to recommend tradesmen, ask for a written quote, shop around before making a decision, don't pay upfront, pay by cheque or credit card and keep an eye out for any elderly relatives or neighbours."

If you have any concerns about rogue traders please call 101.

Do you have a story to share with our readers?

Contact the Newsdesk on **01235 516930**

or email **news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk**

'New Homes Bonus' for areas of borough

AREAS in North Hampshire where new homes have been built are set to benefit from up to £7m in funding, to support the development of communities.

By **Adam Flinn**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council will be offering grants to fund infrastructure improvements, such as delivering larger-scale facilities, that generally cost over £25,000.

Communities can apply for funding through their borough councillor, with the money coming from the council's new Local Infrastructure Fund supported by the government's New Homes Bonus scheme.

Deputy leader Cllr Ranil Jayawardena said: "Thanks to careful budgeting, the council has not had to use all of this funding to support its normal spending.

"We have listened to local residents and are investing in addressing the priorities of communities where new housing has been built.

"The majority of the New Homes Bonus received [will be allocated] to improving infrastructure, of which half will be spent through the Local Infrastructure Fund.

"We are keen for the communities that have provided more homes to get the funding they need to ensure that their local infrastructure isn't overstretched.

"The fund means they can work with their local borough councillor to decide what would make the most difference in their area."

Community groups, parish and town councils and public sector organisations have until January 31 to apply for the first round of funding, with further rounds concluding on March 31 and September 26.

Money can be used to support other sources of funding or to enhance projects provided by other bodies, or new projects developed by specific areas or communities.

Projects can be set up outside the area affected by housing developments if benefits for the community can be achieved elsewhere, such as expanding facilities in neighbouring areas.

Communities that can apply currently include the Basingstoke town area, Rooksdown, Sherfield-on-Loddon, Bramley, Overton, Ecchinswell/Sydmonton, Burghclere, Baughurst and Whitchurch.

For more information, go to www.basingstoke.gov.uk/go/infrastructurefund.

Finally! New building for Bramley school

A NEW building at a Bramley primary school has been officially opened at a special ceremony.

After six months of work to expand Bramley Church of England Primary School, Cllr Peter Edgar, executive member for Education at the county council, joined interim head teacher Lyn Downes in a ribbon cutting ceremony.

They were joined by chair of governers Nicky Parker and the Rev Arthur Botham, area dean of Basingstoke.

The new facilities include five new classrooms and an extension to the existing assembly hall while the school is expanding by 105 places.

Cllr Edgar said: "The £1.67million investment we have made to transform and expand this school will ensure that local need for school places in the coming years can be met easily.

"Across the county, we are ensuring 8,000 additional primary school places will be available, in areas of high demand, with a planned investment of £165million."

Ms Parker added: "My thanks to the construction team for creating such a great space for us. We are rightly very proud of our lovely new facilities. I am also very grateful to the local authority for funding and supporting us with this project, and parents for their patience."

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Kenilworth Road
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St Lukes Hall, Winchester Street
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Tel: Lynn 07885 765341

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Bramley Village hall, The Street
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Tel: Kate 07853 869168

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Entertainment

Welcome to our Entertainments page where we are showcasing all that is good in local entertainment ranging from professional to amateur acts.
If you would like your event considered for publication please contact reporter Adam Flinn at adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk or telephone 01235 516933

Acts announced for 2014 at Anvil

By **Adam Flinn**
adam@taylornewspapers.co.uk

BASINGSTOKE'S Anvil theatre has revealed its line-up of shows for the first few months of 2014, starting with a performance by the London Symphony Orchestra on January 15.

The orchestra will be playing pieces by Mendelssohn and Schumann, accompanied by famous conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

Strictly Come Dancing star Brendan Cole brings his new stage show to The Anvil, as his cast of 20 musicians and dancers host an evening of ballroom entertainment in this live dance extravaganza.

Paying tribute to the music of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, Let's Hang On perform a medley of hits from the group who found fame through the Broadway hit musical Jersey Boys.

The Russian State Ballet and Orchestra of Serbia will be in Basingstoke in February, as they stage performances of Giselle and Swan Lake.

Writer and comedian Stewart Lee presents his new show exploring ideas including justifiable shoplifting, parental alcoholism and Judith Chalmers, in preparation for an upcoming television series.

Anton du Beke stars in Ballroom to Broadway on February 22, as he introduces new choreography to the music of Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Jerry Herman and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

March begins with a performance by singer-songwriter Beth Nielsen Chapman, following the release of her latest album 'Uncovered'.

The Moscow State Circus returns to the UK for their first ever European tour, featuring the ladder-balancing Efremkin Brothers, the Yakovlev Vertical Pole Jugglers and superstar clowns Pavlik and Klava.

Comedian Ken Dodd has been entertaining audiences for years, and performs his famous and unique Happiness Show at The Anvil on March 16.

And the Basingstoke Symphony Orchestra close out the month with music from Beethoven, Elgar and Tchaikovsky, with conductor Stephen Scotchmer.

More information on these plus other Anvil shows, including start times and ticket prices, can be found at www.anvilarts.org.uk or by calling 01256 844244.

• Stewart Lee presents 'Much A-Stew About Nothing' on February 11 (Picture by Steve Ullathorne). (Left) Giselle and Swan Lake come to The Anvil from February 7 to 9

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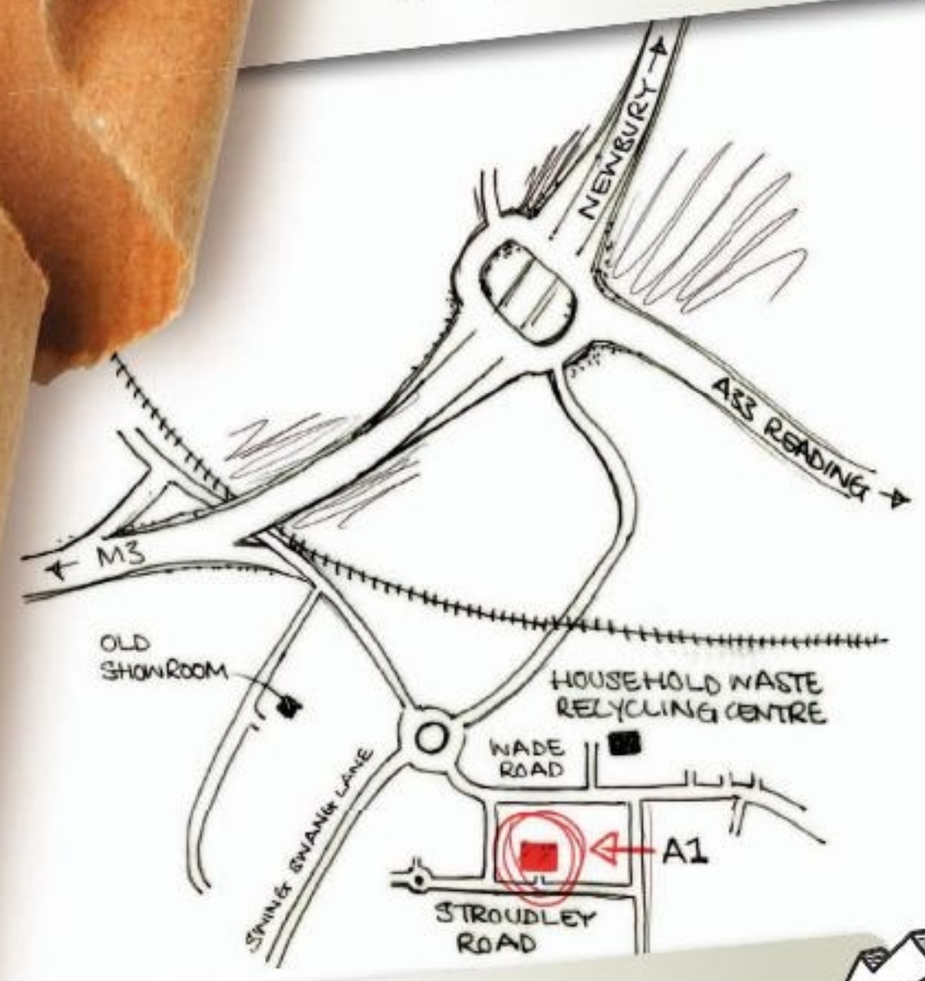

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21 January
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30 January, 7:30pm
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HAL CRUTTENDEN
01256 844244 www.anvilarts.org.uk

31 January, 7:30pm
Central Studio Queen Mary's College
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REVIEW: CHEVROLET CRUZE

By **Philip Shoulder**

@writeonmotoring

THINK medium sized family hatchback and the usual suspects are likely to enter your mind: Ford Focus, Vauxhall Astra, Volkswagen Golf, and Skoda Octavia, along with newcomers from Kia and Hyundai... but Chevrolet?

In recent years, the American brand has also had its eyes set on the European hatchback market. Now the firm is offering its medium saloon – the Cruze – in hatchback and estate guises.

This new contender to the competitive medium-sized family sector bears very close relation to the perennial Vauxhall Astra, sharing the same platform, running gear and other key components.

Cruze comes in four trim guises. S and LS models get CD/MP3 playback, digital radio, front electric windows, adjustable steering column and manual air-conditioning, with higher spec LT and LTZ benefiting from MP3, iPod connectivity, automatic climate control, cruise control, sat-nav and auto lights and wipers.

A nice touch is the woven fabric material that covers the dashboard and front doors. It looks distinctive and is effective in breaking up the boring mass of plastic.

Inside, the Cruze offers generous amounts of space and great versatility – the extra rear overhang resulting in a 413 litre boot - substantially bigger than Astra's 351 litres and the Ford Focus's 316 litres. Throughout the cabin there's various storage places, including the two-tier glove box, centre console and door pockets incorporating bottle holders, while a central cubby doubles as an arm rest. Seating is comfortable, if a bit firm; the driving position will accommodate drivers of all sizes. The Cruze might not have quite such a sophisticated suspension set-up as the Astra, but on the road, for the most part, you'll be none the wiser – as the Chevrolet feels secure, planted and fluid. The ride can get a bit fidgety on some rougher roads at lower speeds, but on most surfaces it's pliant enough.

The 1.7 litre diesel strikes a skilful balance between offering good economy (62.7mpg claimed) and low CO2 emissions (117g/km), with strong, useable performance. Rather thick B-pillars do slightly block over-the-shoulder-vision when parking, albeit no worse than many cars in this class, but front parking sensors would certainly be a helpful edition.

Verdict:

It might not quite have the polish of the best performers in this class, but nevertheless, it's hard not to be won over with this very worthy and capable effort from Chevrolet.

• *The new Chevrolet Cruze*

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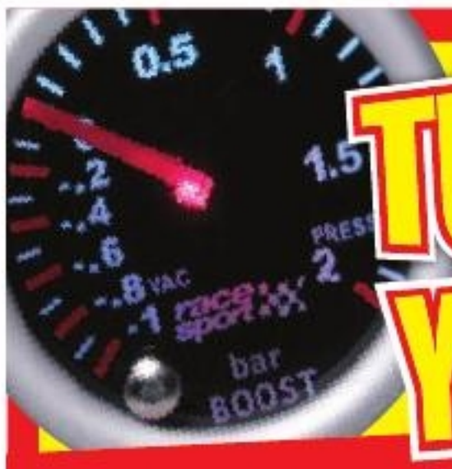

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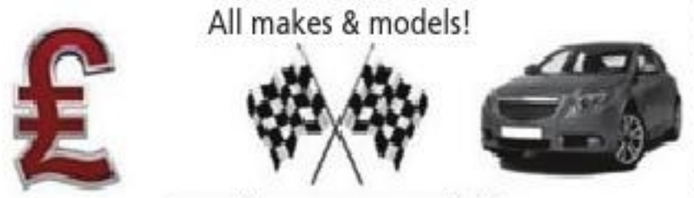

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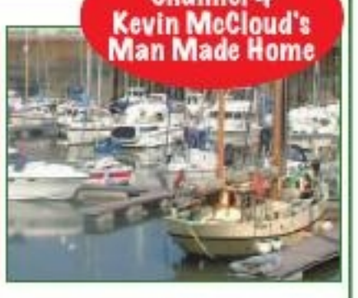

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Mixed weekend for Sheppard's Bison as Miller leaves the Herd

Stuttering Jam Boys lose to Horndean

AFTER going 12 league games unbeaten between September and December, Whitchurch United have now lost two of their last three in the Wessex Premier League.

The Jam Boys were beaten 2-0 at home to Horndean on Saturday, following on from a scoreless draw with Alresford Town on Boxing Day and a 2-1 defeat against Blackfield and Langley before Christmas.

Despite the results, Whitchurch remain sixth in the table but are now 13 points behind leaders Sholing, who have four games in hand.

But there was better news for Wessex First Division side Tadley Calleva, as they were 2-0 winners away to Ringwood Town.

Calleva are now up to eighth in the standings, three points behind seventh-placed New Milton Town.

Elsewhere, Hartley Wintney lost their eighth game from their last 11 Combined Counties Premier league matches, as they were beaten 1-0 away to Camberley Town.

A poor run of results mean that Wintney have slipped to 15th in the table, but have as many as seven games in hand compared to some of the teams around them.

Whitchurch travel to Folland Sports, Calleva are away to United Services Portsmouth while Wintney host Molesey in their next games on Saturday.

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BASINGSTOKE Bison had a mixed weekend in the English Ice Hockey Premier League, coming back from a 7-5 defeat against Swindon Wildcats on Saturday to beat Sheffield Steeldogs on Sunday.

By James Booker
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

Hosts Swindon got off to a fast start as they scored within the opening three minutes for Aaron Nell's first of the evening, for the only goal of the first period.

Nine more goals followed in the second period between the two teams in what was an extremely busy 20 minutes, which began with Adam Harding doubling the Wildcats' advantage at 21:51.

Joe Miller got Bison off the mark, quickly followed by goals from Ciaran Long and Miroslav Vantroba, to give the visitors the lead.

But within 30 seconds Swindon tied through Nell's second, and re-took the lead through Jonas Hoog before Bison's Joe Miller levelled the match.

Long briefly put Bison back ahead before Henri Sandvik got one back within half a minute, to leave the score at 5-5 going into the final period.

Swindon were able to take advantage in the last 20 minutes, as Nell completed his hat-trick and Sandvik added his second, for a final result of 7-5 to the home side.

On Sunday, Bison came out as the winners in a penalty shoot-out against Sheffield Steeldogs, with Miller scoring in what was his final game with the squad.

Visitors Sheffield opened the scoring through Lubomir Korhon in a little over a minute, with Andrew Hirst doubling their lead at 8:13 as he was left alone in front of the net to score.

Bison got one back at 16:27 as Aaron Connolly fired one past Steeldogs' netminder Dalibor Sedlar, to leave the score at 2-1 after the first period.

The Steeldogs restored their two-goal cushion at 21:42, but were pegged back through Joe Greener with an assist from Stuart Mogg, for the latter's first career premier league point.

The hosts levelled the match at 43:18 with a Greener powerplay, before Ben Morgan restored Sheffield's lead at 45:49.

But Long was able to net the equaliser at 52:26, and the score remained at 4-4 following five minutes of overtime.

After Sheffield missed their first three efforts and Bison their first two, it was Miller who netted the winner with his last shot for the Basingstoke side.

Bison travelled to Guildford Flames yesterday evening as the Observer went to press.

• Joe Miller has now left the Bison (Picture by Grant King)

Basingstoke hoping to stop the rot

BASINGSTOKE RFC get the second half of their season underway on Saturday, with a home match against Old Elthamians.

• James Croker

The hosts will be looking to get their season back on track, after losing their last four games against Tring, Barnes, Tonbridge Juddians and league-leaders Dorking.

'Stoke lost their previous encounter with Old Elthamians back in September, when they were beaten 49-14 in what was the third game of the season.

Basingstoke's recent run of results mean they have dropped to 11th in the National League 3 London and South East standings, with 27 points and five wins from 14 games.

But they are just three points behind 10th-placed Westcombe Park, and could leapfrog the Kent side if results go their way.

Saturday's opponents Old Elthamians are currently second in the table with 58 points, and have only lost one game all season when they were beaten 20-7 by East Grinstead on December 7.

In their last match they were 34-7 winners at home to Thurrock, but 'Stoke will be confident after their improved performance against unbeaten Dorking before Christmas.

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Inside: Basingstoke hoping to stop the rot | Stuttering Jam Boys lose to Horndean

MORE ADDITIONS AT THE CAMROSE

Trio of signings for Dragons as they beat Farnborough to end bad run

BASINGSTOKE Town look to start 2014 having halted a recent slump that threatened to derail their season.

Jason Bristow's side thumped Farnborough 4-0 on Boxing Day as they stopped a run of four straight losses in the Skrill South.

Goals from Manny Williams, Shaun McAuley, Kezie Ibe and debutant Louie Soares gave the Dragons victory.

Midfielder Soares has signed on non-contract terms, and boasts a wealth of football league experience, having represented Barnet, Southend and most notably Aldershot.

At the time of signing, Bristow told the club: "Louie has been training with us for a couple of weeks and has impressed, he has good experience and be an asset to the team, he has a great delivery and good quality in possession."

Soares started his career at Reading, and has represented Barbados twice at international level, scoring once.

The Dragons were hoping to build on their Boxing Day victory with another win at Gosport Borough two days later.

However, the match was abandoned just minutes into the second period due to floodlight failure.

By **James Booker**
news@basingstokeobserver.co.uk

At the time, Bristow's side were trailing 1-0, with Dan Wooden's goal the difference between the two sides.

As the Observer went to print, the Dragons faced their Boxing Day victims Farnborough in a quick reverse fixture on New Year's Day, which paves the way for a hectic January.

Bristow's men have five more games in the month, four of them home fixture against Tonbridge Angels (January 4), Bath City (January 11), Whitehawk (January 14) and Sutton United (January 25).

These are punctuated by a trip to Eastbourne Borough on January 18.

And 'Stoke have made two further additions to strengthen the squad in anticipation of the intensity of the upcoming fixture schedule.

Midfielder Matt Partridge has re-joined the club on loan from Reading, having made a handful of appearances for the Dragons earlier this season.

Basingstoke-born frontman Ben Wright, who started his career at the Camrose has also joined the ranks from Salisbury City.

• Simon Dunn (left) in action for Basingstoke – the midfielder was injured later in the game (Picture by Les Chase)

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